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Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East

Letter dated 28 January 2014 from the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I am writing to you regarding the developments on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, which was proposed, for the very first time, by Iran in 1974 and is indicative of the long-standing commitment of my country to the establishment of such a zone.

Indeed, the consensual and constant adoption, since 1980, of General Assembly resolutions in support of the establishment of that zone signifies the particular importance of the realization of this noble idea for the international community.

Moreover, the States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons have highlighted the establishment of such a zone in the Middle East as a matter of priority in all consensus final documents, resolutions and decisions of the successive Review Conferences of the Parties to the Treaty.

To operationalize this idea, the Review and Extension Conference of the Non-Proliferation Treaty in 1995 adopted a separate resolution on the Middle East. Subsequently, the 2000 and 2010 Review Conferences of the Parties to the Treaty reaffirmed that the resolution is an essential element of the outcome of the 1995 Conference and of the basis on which the Treaty was indefinitely extended without a vote in 1995, and recognized that the resolution remains valid until the goals and objectives are achieved.

In an important effort to pursue the implementation of the 1995 resolution, the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty renewed the resolve of States parties to the Treaty to undertake, individually and collectively, all necessary measures aimed at prompt implementation of the resolution, and unanimously decided to convene a conference in 2012, to be attended by all States of the Middle East, on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. This decision was supported overwhelmingly by

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the international community, and many efforts were exerted for the successful commencement of the conference in Helsinki in late 2012.

Consistent with its long-standing policy on, and commitment to, the idea of the establishment of such a zone, Iran positively engaged in consultations conducted by the facilitator and conveners of the conference and declared, well in advance, its readiness to participate in the conference.

However, the Helsinki conference was prevented only owing to the opposition of Israel, and as you are well aware, notwithstanding all efforts and strong global calls, during the past several years, for the convening of the Helsinki conference and establishment of that zone, regrettably, no progress has been achieved so far.

Taking into account the initiative presented by the Arab Republic of Egypt in the General Assembly on 28 September 2013, the Islamic Republic of Iran reiterates its long-standing position in support of the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction.

The Islamic Republic of Iran, while underlining the importance of the Review Conferences of the Parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty as the only proper mechanism to deal with such an important issue, once again stresses that the Helsinki conference should be carried out according to the rules of procedure of the Review Conferences of the Parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty, in particular the rule of consensus, and its agenda should only be the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, as identified by the Final Document of the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

Likewise, to reach an agreement on a time-bound plan of action for universality of the Non-Proliferation Treaty in the Middle East leading to the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction should be the only focus of the Helsinki conference. Any precondition for the participation in the conference or the establishment of such a zone is contrary to the letter and spirit of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East and the Final Document of the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and therefore should seriously be avoided.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter circulated as a document of the General Assembly under agenda item 95.

(*Signed*) Mohammad **Khazaee**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative